



I Got the Winning Smile

I stood in front of the mirror, looked at my new smile and said: "You should have done this a long time ago."

I have had the privilege of working for Arrowhead Dental Laboratory and the Dr. Dick Barnes Group for ten years. During that time I have seen amazing smile transformations from both a clinical and technical perspective. Although I knew the process rather well, my own experience as a patient was surprising. The day Dr. Dan Hillis finished my teeth, I stood in front of the mirror, looked at my new smile and said, "You should have done this a long time ago."

Since I was a kid people have complimented my white, well proportioned smile. My childhood dentist often told me I was lucky to have the teeth I had. Throughout the years I went to my cleaning appointments, took care of a few cavities, and had the occasional chip smoothed. As I grew older, I noticed things that bothered me about my teeth. It started with the appearance of discoloration and

The outcome had definitely exceeded my expectations!

decalcification spots. Later it became obvious that I had rotated teeth, receding gums, wear patterns, chips and crazed lines in the enamel. My smile was only from cuspid to cuspid, the buccal corridor was not visible and my teeth were all the same length. I didn't like the way they looked.

Every time I raised these concerns with my dentist I was told that they were simply symptoms of aging. Nothing was broken, so why fix it? I went from dentist to dentist because they seemed interested only in addressing what was needed and not what I wanted. I wanted even color, longer teeth; I didn't want to force my smile in order to show my teeth. I desired what every professional at my age wants—a winning smile.

I was stunned when I saw the white wax up for the first time. What I had envisioned was right in front of my eyes. Everything I wanted was there, length, shape, buccal corridor, etc. I couldn't wait to get stated. The experience of having my teeth prepped for my new smile was amazing; the simplicity of the process was overwhelming.

Dr. Hillis used a CO₂ laser to reshape the tissue; I didn't feel any discomfort and there was no bleeding. Before I knew it I was done, twelve preps were completed and my temps looked as beautiful as the white wax-up. I have a new-found respect for dentists and staff that have mastered the art of showing a patient the right combination of skill, vision and care.

The weeks after the placement of the temps passed quickly, and before I knew it I was back at the dentist's office to receive my permanent teeth. The bonding procedure seemed as simple as the prepping. I was pleasantly surprised at how strong the restorations appeared and how natural they felt in my mouth.

What I didn't anticipate was how emotional the experience would be. I was blown away by the impact my new smile had on my appearance and my confidence. My expectations had been exceeded.

Reflecting on this experience I feel truly blessed. I always knew that I worked with highly skilled professionals who were passionate about their work. But to see the culmination of all their efforts in my new smile was both gratifying and humbling. I wish that all patients could experience the transformative power of comprehensive dentistry.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Dan Hillis and the Arrowhead Team for their great work. I now have the winning smile I have wanted for years. ■

